



New England Vegetable & Berry Growers Association

Greenhouse Tomatoes!

Greenhouse or hot house growers in New England start harvesting tasty vine ripe tomatoes in early May through mid July. Some growers also produce a second planting for harvesting from autumn through March. Although considered a vegetable by most people, tomatoes are actually the fruit of several plants of the genus *Lycopersicon*.

Locally grown tomatoes have a big advantage over those that are shipped across the country. They are from varieties chosen for their juiciness and flavor, rather than for their ability to withstand harsh treatment during shipping. They are also picked ripe from the vine to obtain optimum flavor.



BUYING and STORING

Greenhouse tomatoes should be heavy for their size, plump, firm, even-shaped and free of surface cracks and bruises. Greenhouse tomatoes are red when ripe.

A fine star-shaped marking on the bottom of a greenhouse tomato will tell you that the tomato has already begun its final ripening process and is a good one to select.

Store greenhouse tomatoes at a cool room temperature, out of direct sunlight. Ripe tomatoes will keep for a few days and unripe tomatoes will ripen slowly. Do not store tomatoes in the refrigerator as this will decrease flavor and alter texture.

PREPARATION

Slicing: To keep tomato slices juicy, slice them top to bottom rather than crosswise.

Seed removal: Halve tomato crosswise, then gently squeeze each half and allow the seeds to drip out. Using a rounded spoon handle, scoop out any remaining seeds. To save the juice, do this over a sieve set above a bowl.

Peeling: Cut an "X" through the tomato skin at the bottom of the tomato. Immerse them briefly in boiling water - 10 to 30 seconds - then in cold water and peel immediately. Skin should easily peel off.

The Facts About



New England greenhouse tomatoes...by the numbers

growers	100 +
area harvested	700,000 sq. ft.
total production.....	2 million lbs
value of crop statewide	\$15.6 million

Nutrition facts

Tomatoes are a good source of Vitamin C and a source of Vitamin A, folacin and potassium. Lycopene is responsible for the characteristic deep-red color of ripe tomato fruits and tomato products.

Among the various fruits and vegetables, tomato is the richest source of lycopene. Lycopene is one of a family of pigments called carotenoids, which occur naturally in fruits and vegetables.

Numerous studies suggest that lycopene may actively inhibit the development of prostate, digestive tract, breast, lung and cervical cancer as well as cardiovascular disease and age-related macular degeneration – the most common form of blindness for elderly people in the western world.